

PRESCRIBED GRAZING GUIDELINES

Small Scale/ Limited Resource Farmers Initiative

Requirements for obtaining an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) incentive payment for Prescribed Grazing:

1. **Soil test required** (UT, A & L or Waters Lab). Areas of contrasting soils, problem spots, or portions of fields where yields are significantly different should be sampled separately, provided the area can be fertilized separately. Examples: bottomland and upland. See University of Tennessee (UT) publication PB 1061 for soil sampling information.
2. **Develop a conservation plan with a grazing component** for the land with NRCS assistance. (May need to over-seed with legumes and/or grasses as needed in order to maintain the desired stand.)
3. **Apply lime** as required by soil test (UT soil test recommendation). Lime must be applied the first year, when required. When lime is required, applications may be split with some application of lime occurring over a one-, two- or three-year period. All lime required must be completed by the end of the third year.
4. **Apply fertilizer** annually by soil test maintenance recommendations to meet required pasture and hay production levels. If required pasture and hay production levels are currently met or exceeded, no additional fertilizer is needed. Target Medium fertility level.
5. **Balance forage.** Complete the Graze Program in order to balance livestock forage needs with the forage produced and purchased. Adjust livestock numbers, fertilizer rates, or purchased feed in order to meet livestock forage needs.
6. **Implement a rotational grazing plan** that has a minimum of five (5) paddocks or fields. Attempt to develop a grazing system that plans for no more than 14 days of continuous grazing on the same paddock or field.
7. **Control weeds** in the pastureland by clipping, spraying, and/or wiping as needed. Complete a pest management plan as a part of the conservation plan.
8. **Do not graze forages lower than the minimum grazing height.** Graze no more than 20 percent of the acreage to less than the minimum grazing height. (Not less than 3 inches for cool season grasses or recommended grazing heights for other seed mixtures. A pasture stick and training will be provided by NRCS field personnel.)
9. **Receipts must be provided to receive payments.** Payments of up to \$15.00 per acre for up to three years will be made. You must spend \$15.00 or more per acre for each of the three years to receive a payment for prescribed grazing. Receipts must be provided. Examples of acceptable items include lime, fencing/fence repair, clipping, spraying, watering facilities, pipelines, seed, seeding, or fertilizer.

10. **Recordkeeping** is needed in all agricultural operations; livestock production is no exception. Use of the Grazing Land and Livestock Resource Inventory or other appropriate guidebook system will be required as an aid in recordkeeping and presented annually before receiving incentive payments. The guidebooks are available through the local Soil Conservation District (SCD) office.
11. **Payments** for prescribed grazing will not be made until after the rotational grazing is carried out. In Tennessee, the grazing season extends from April-October, thus payments should not be made before the end of September. Record of rotational grazing must be submitted with receipts and request for payment (see item 10). Good grazers will be able to extend the season by one or more additional months.